

1 THE HONORABLE KEVIN KELLY, MAYOR, ELGIN, IL

2
3 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Our third speaker is the Mayor of
4 Elgin, Illinois, Kevin Kelly.

5 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you for inviting me to address
6 you on the importance of casino gaming in Elgin, Illinois. The
7 City of Elgin is proud to be the home of the Grand Victoria
8 Casino, the number one casino in Illinois.

9 The Grand Victoria has had a tremendous impact on the
10 Elgin community since opening in October, 1994. In addition to
11 its substantial economic stimulus, it has had a dramatic positive
12 benefit related to community pride and image.

13 The Grand Victoria employs approximately 1,600 and
14 has a \$37 million annual payroll. It generates an average of
15 over 10,000 visits per day into a part of the community that
16 previously could have been considered blighted. Total attendance
17 since October, 1994 is over 12 million.

18 Grand Victoria's gaming and lease revenues to the
19 city of Elgin have been in excess of \$59 million, including
20 nearly 19 million annually the last two years. This level is
21 expected to continue, barring a change in Illinois' regulatory
22 environment. These funds have allowed the city to make
23 adjustments in our fundamental infrastructure and to provide tax
24 relief and finance other initiatives which otherwise would have
25 been beyond our capabilities.

26 Some examples of these expenditures include a state
27 of the art communications system; renovation of our civic center;
28 street improvements; property tax rebate; and programs for the
29 arts. Attached for your analysis is a description of the

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1 initiatives and improvements the city of Elgin has funded with
2 the casino revenues, as well as a list of our planned
3 expenditures through the years 1998 to 2002. That's exhibit one.

4 On a broader scale, total cumulative revenues from
5 the Grand Victoria to the State of Illinois are in excess of \$122
6 million. The casino's agreement with county government provides
7 for an annual contribution that recently exceeded nine million.

8 A fair assessment of the casino would not be complete
9 without considering the Grand Victoria foundation, a charitable
10 organization funded by gaming profits. Since March of last year
11 the foundation has contributed over three and a half million
12 dollars to philanthropic causes throughout the region.

13 The Grand Victoria has also helped enhance the image
14 of Elgin center city. What was perceived as a declining area is
15 now viewed with optimism. Our revitalization and renewal is more
16 than image, it's reality. Since 1995 three of the largest and
17 most distressed buildings in center city have undergone multi-
18 million dollar renovations and now contain nearly 500 employees.

19 The casino's negative impact on Elgin has been
20 negligible. Only 142 police calls were made to the Grand
21 Victoria in the past year, most were for nuisance related
22 problems. Attached for your review is documentation for all the
23 police calls made and the type of calls since May 1st, 1994,
24 exhibit two.

25 Further evidence of its minimal negative impact is
26 quantified gambling addiction. The city-sponsored gambling
27 addiction program started in January, 1996, and has served only
28 63 clients through September 30, 1997. Attached are the program
29 statistics, exhibit three.

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1 We believe the Grand Victoria Casino provides a win-
2 win-win situation. It is an outstanding community asset. It is
3 profitable as a business. And its customers enjoy the
4 entertainment. Gaming has evolved from a form of vice to a form
5 of entertainment. Thank you again for the opportunity to present
6 these remarks. Best wishes for the success of your study.

7 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

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